

# OARC in Action

## OARC Board of Directors and staff met with Honorable Dipika Damerla, Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and Matt Boudreau, Special Assistant at Legislative Assembly of Ontario

The Honorable Dipika Damerla attended OARC Board of Directors meeting in March 2015 to learn more about OARC and the value of Residents' Councils in LTC homes as well as to learn more about the Resident Quality Inspection (RQI) process from residents' perspective. Our Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care was successful in conducting an RQI in every LTC home in 2014. OARC surveyed member Residents' Councils asking for feedback on their experience with their most recent RQI. The information shared with Minister Damerla is to be used to shape and refine the RQI process in the upcoming year.



Top L-R: Donna Fairley, Dorothy Asselstine, Minister Dipika Damerla, Dee Lender  
Bottom L-R: Sharron Cooke, Sam Clark, Devora Greenspon, Josie Ince

Ontario's new Minister of Health, Honorable Eric Hoskins, when outlining his health strategy titled Patients First: Action Plan for Health Care stated, "We are moving away from a time when we used to provide care FOR patients to a time when we provide care WITH them." OARC's philosophy, mandate and programs directly align with this health plan. OARC continues to support our government's ability to understand residents' experience through:



Matt Boudreau and Dorothy Asselstine

- accepting Minister Damerla's invitation to participate in a discussion at Queen's Park addressing the adequacy of funding in LTC
- facilitating workshops with inspectors who conduct RQIs. The workshops emphasize the importance of the Residents' Council interview and "digging deeply" through their questions and observations to protect residents' dignity and respect
- inviting our Ministry to personally attend a portion of every Board meeting to build positive relationships and exchange information face to face

## Studying the Effectiveness of Residents' and Family Councils in LTC Homes

The Change Foundation, an independent health policy and research organization, has partnered with OARC, Family Councils Ontario, Ontario Long Term Care Association (OLTCA), and Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors (OANHSS) to study the effectiveness of Residents' and Family Councils in LTC. The goal is to better understand the role, functioning and impact of the Councils and identify areas for quality improvement. Surveys will be widely distributed to residents, family members, Staff Assistants and Administrators within the next few weeks. OARC encourages all residents to participate. By doing so, residents' personal experience will influence improvement, and increase the understanding of the value of Residents' Councils.

# Meaningful Education

## OARC & George Brown Activation Students

OARC facilitated a class with one hundred George Brown College students graduating from the Activation Coordinator/Gerontology Program, many of whom will chose to work in long-term care. The knowledge gained will assist them in supporting Residents' Councils.



L-R: Devora Greenspon, Sharron Cooke, Maura Bauscom

Professor, Maura Bauscom, commented on the heightened learning experience.

“Perhaps this information could have been received from the OARC website, but the real value came from the live experience. Dee Lender gave a thorough and detailed presentation of the workings of OARC, its mission and philosophy and the significant power of its work in supporting Residents' Councils. Sharron Cooke and Devora Greenspon brought the real human aspect to the topic. The presentation was personal, interactive and experiential. My students left the class well informed, prepared and inspired for an important aspect of the long-term care environment and for the client population they will be working with.”

After the presentation, students were asked to comment on what they learned and how they felt. Students said that a Residents' Council:

- “improves quality of life and ensures that residents are heard”
- “assists residents in building confidence” and “empowers them to speak freely amongst peers”
- “makes the jobs of care providers easier because Residents' Councils provide a forum for feedback”

One student exclaimed, “I hope to be asked to help Residents' Council when I am finished college!”

## Legislation Clarification: Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007

*Under Residents' Council—Duty to Respond—“the licensee shall, within 10 days of receiving the advice, respond to the Residents' Council in writing” c. 8, s 57 (2)*

What does this mean?

One of the roles of a Residents' Council is to bring recommendations and advice forward to the Administrator of the LTC home. The instruction found in our legislation (above) is for the Administrator to respond to the Residents' Council in writing, within 10 days of receiving the information.

Question: 10 business days or 10 calendar days?

There may be some underlying confusion because in another area of the legislation (LTCHA, 2007 101. (1)), dealing with the ‘reporting and complaints’ process in the home, the Administrator is directed to respond within 10 business days. OARC has received clarification from our government, that the requirement for responding to advice that comes through the Residents' Council, is within 10 calendar days (i.e. includes weekends and holidays).

It is important to note that a complete resolution to the identified concern, may not be possible within 10 calendar days. What is required, is documentation given to the Residents' Council that demonstrates receipt of the concern, that discussions have begun, and may even outline an action plan to resolve the issue.

We hope that this clarification is helpful as you work this knowledge back through the processes in place in your homes in supporting the communication between the Administrator and Residents' Council.

## OARC Membership Renewal Reminder

OARC's membership notices for April 2015 - March 2016 have been sent to all homes. Your membership is important to us and contributes to supporting Residents' Councils across Ontario to improve their effectiveness and sustainability. Thank you for your support.

**Questions, comments or clarifications may be addressed to:**

**Ontario Association of Residents' Councils**

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